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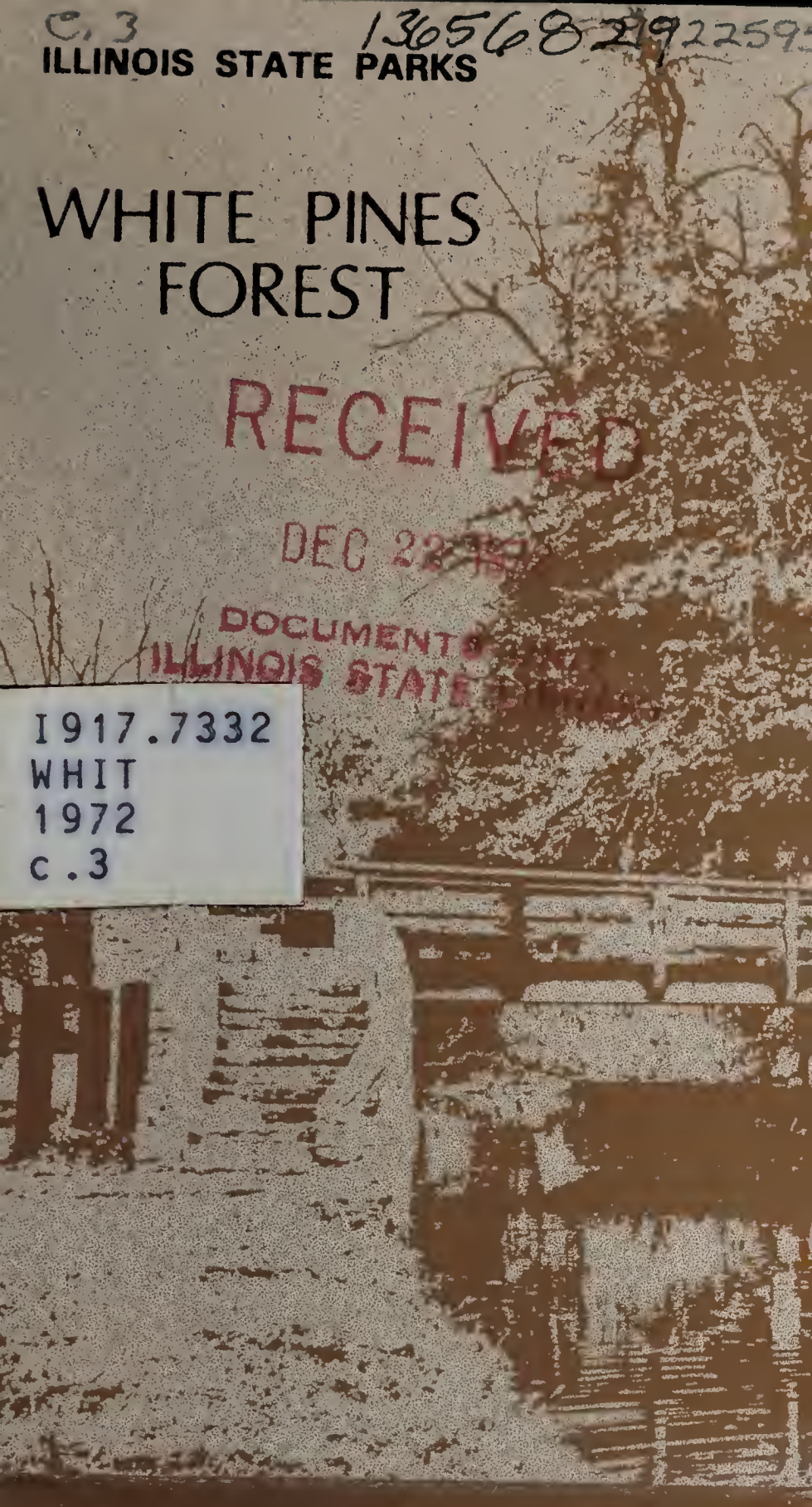
ILLINOIS STATE PARKS

WHITE PINES FOREST



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For further information concerning Illinois State Parks and Memorials write to the Division of Education, Department of Conservation, State Office Building, Springfield 62706.

Numerous State Parks and Memorials are within easy access to every part of the state. Lodges, cabins and dining rooms are important features of Illinois Beach, Starved Rock, Pere Marquette, White Pines Forest, and Giant City State Parks. Reservations for lodging should be made with lodge managers.

Admittance will not be granted groups of 25 or more persons to any state park or conservation area unless permission from the park ranger has been secured to use facilities. It is also required that groups of minors have adequate supervision and that at least one responsible adult accompany each group not exceeding 15 minors. All pets must be on leash in state parks or conservation areas.

All state parks are open the year round, except when weather conditions necessitate the closing of park roads during freezing and thawing periods when access to park facilities is by foot only.

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THE PARK

White Pines Forest State Park, in northwestern Illinois, is in Ogle county about 7 miles west of Oregon and 12 miles north of Dixon. During pioneer days the blacktop road forming the south boundary of the 385-acre park was the old Chicago-Iowa trail, for years the principal route east and west across this part of the state.

While developing the park for the convenience and happiness of visitors, the state has preserved carefully its native charm and protected the virgin pine stand, the southernmost of its kind in the midwest.

HISTORY

Early Ogle County settlers found this forest along the east bank of Pine Creek extending back a quarter of a mile and covering an area of 700 acres. It was with a view toward preserving Illinois' last stand of white pines for future generations that a movement to set aside the area as a state park was started in the early part of the twentieth century.

Through efforts of Ogle County nature lovers, a bill appropriating $30,000 for purchase of the land was passed by the legislature in 1903, but the measure was vetoed. It was not until 1927 that the forest was acquired for a state park.

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Story of the Pines: The pines once dominated vast regions of North America and have occupied a spectacular place in American history. A forest of white pines greeted the Pilgrims when they landed at Plymouth Rock. Massachusetts used wooden money (shillings) in early days, not only made from the white pine, but also stamped with its figure. The first houses in America of which we have any record were constructed of white pine.

The utility of the white pine has worked its own ruin, for it was useful in all kinds of construction from masts of ships to matches. Its tall trunks made it invaluable for lumber for all purposes.

The balsamic White Pine Forest has ever been considered the ideal place for people suffering from lung disase. The Indians valued the white pine for its many medical uses. The inner bark was used in the treatment of many lung ailments. Long before the Turkish bath became popular, the Indian used pine twigs for his medical sweat bath.

GOOD FISHING IN CREEK

Early War Area: The vicinity of White Pine Forest State Park, in the heart of the Black Hawk country, is rich in historic associations with the brave warrior who resisted for so long the efforts of the white man to drive his people from their beloved Rock River valley.

One important engagement in the Black Hawk War, fought above Dixon in May, 1832, resulted in the complete rout of poorly-disciplined volunteers under the command of Governor John Reynolds. Eventually, however, the Indians were driven from the Rock River country and Black Hawk was sent into exile in the custody of his hated rival Keokuk.

THE NATURAL SCENE

Most of the park is an ideal habitat for the white pines. Moss-covered cliffs, decorated with trailing vines, mingle with many of hardwoods and bright blossoming flowers form a fit accompaniment for the pines. But the pines themselves are the focus of attention. Toward them, people instinctively turn their steps as soon as they enter the park.

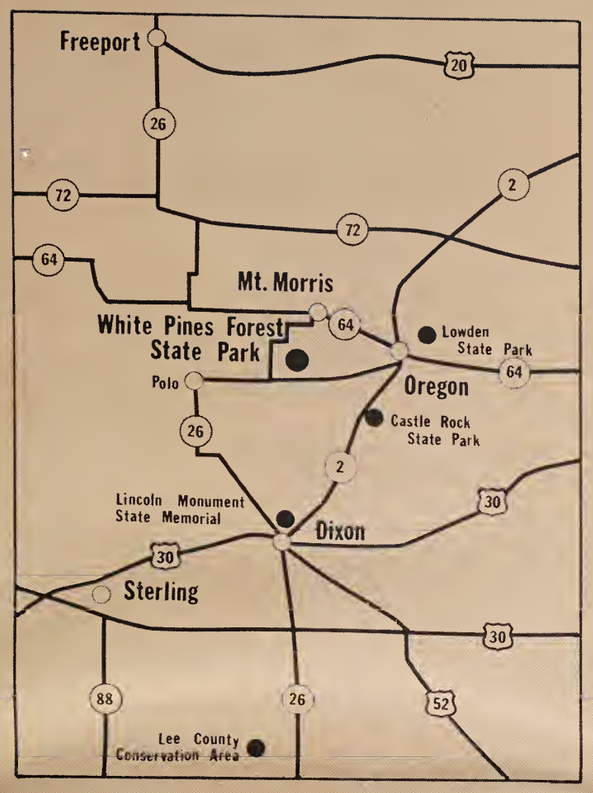
There are many other interesting features in the environs of White Pines Forest. Water comes flashing out at many points and flattens out in lovely streams alive with a variety of fish. Because of the turbulence in rainy weather of these seemingly gentle waters, fords rather than bridges have been constructed along the roadway through the interior of the park.

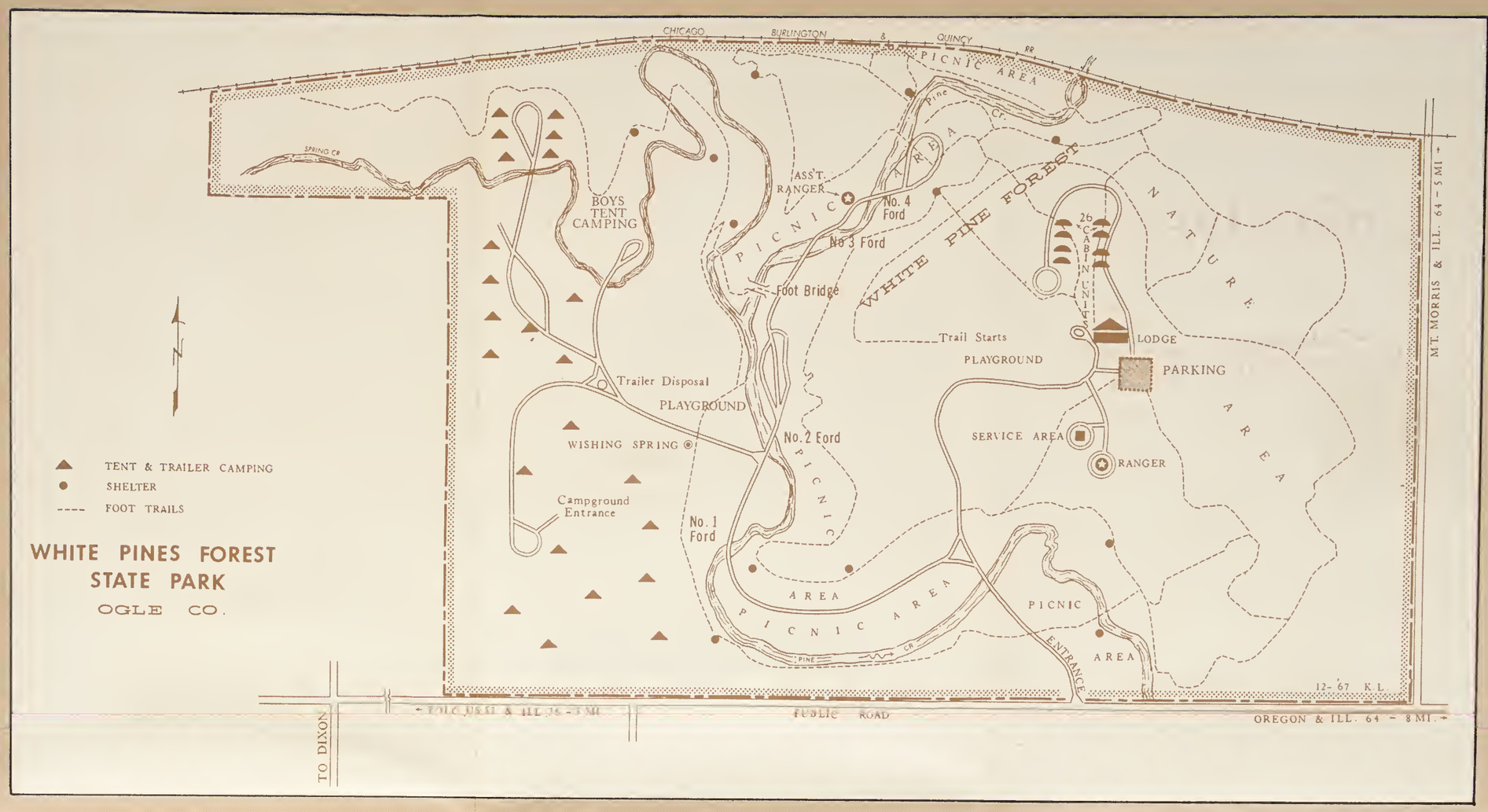
Many common species of fur-bearing animals and birds can be viewed in the varied topography of the park. The red squirrel with his white eyering, the pine mouse and, in the past at least, the pine marten range this territory. Among birds are the pine finch and pine warbler, and in the winter there are many northern species.

LOWDEN NEARBY

On a bluff 12 miles northeast of the park is Lorado Taft's notable American Indian statue at Lowden Memorial State Park. The 48-feet high statue of a stern-visaged warrior peering out across the Rock River valley is an idealization of the Indian race. The monument was unveiled in 1911.

PICTURESQUE PARK FORD





BLUFF ALONG PINE CREEK

RUSTIC LODGE HOUSES
DINING ROOM—LOUNGE

FACILITIES

Hiking: Many miles of foot trails penetrate the stand of virgin pines and are along the crest of the bluff in the west end of the park.

Lodge and Cabins: The park lodge is open to the public from April 1 to November 1. The rustic lodge houses a lounge in one wing with appropriate colorful Indian work. The other wing houses an attractive dining room. Thirteen one-room log cabins and three four-room cabins, fully equipped, are available for overnight visitors.

The lodge and cabins are operated on the European Plan with the price of meals separate from the room rates. Reservations should be directed to the White Pines Forest Lodge, Mt. Morris, Illinois. Telephone AC 815-946-3817.

Picnicking: Good park roads lead to picnic areas with pure water, fireplaces and picnic tables at designated areas. No cooking may be done except on park or camp stoves.

Camping: Permits for tent or trailer areas along with a youth group camping area must be obtained from the park ranger who will assign a site. Permits are issued up to two weeks. Sanitary facilities are also available.